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A Doctoral Resume

LIBERATING THE SELF: A STUDY OF THE PROTAGONISTS IN THE FICTIONAL WORLD OF TONI MORRISON

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I. INTRODUCTION:

The present research concentrates to undertake an in-depth critical study of Toni Morrison's protagonist's journey from bondages to self-emancipation on ground of their racial, gender and social disparity. Majority of her characters suffer from slavery, discrimination, injustice, maltreatment, exploitation by superiority, suffocation and long for freedom, ease, emancipation and liberating their 'self' from such shackles. The present research proposes to explore her entire fictional forte from her first novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970) to her recent novel *God Help the Child* (2015) through this perspective.

Toni Morrison, born on February 18, 1931, at Chloe Anthony Wofford in Lorain, Ohio, U.S.A., is the first black woman to receive Nobel Prize (1993) in Literature. Her views on current situation express the harsh reality of the black communities in America. They are migrated from Africa and suffering from ignorance illiteracy, addiction, poverty etc. The problems such as race, gender questions, carrier, mirage, family conflict, sexual harassment and psychological impact of blackness as slave and impurity, ugliness are core issues of most of the migrated African communities. The race, slavery and gender disparity stands at the core of her fictional forte. Her all eleven novels- *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1974), *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Tar Baby* (1981), *Beloved* (1987;), *Jazz* (1992) *Paradise* (1997), *Love* (2003), *A Mercy* (2008), *Home* (2012) and *God Help the Child* (2015) emphasis on such type of dark realities of life.

I. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To analyze the racial disparity in America
2. To study the class struggle, slavery of black communities in American literature.
3. To understand gender and social disparity, injustice toward migrated people.

4. To understand American social structure, literature and culture differences.
5. To point out significance, importance of Toni Morrison's novels at present situation.
6. To understand inner voice of Toni Morrison through fabrics of attempts of liberating self of her protagonists.

II. HYPOTHESES:

The present study is based on the following hypothesis;

1. The major characters of Toni Morrison's novels depict the need to struggle for self-emancipation and self liberation.
2. All the novels of Toni Morrison deal with the problem of race, slavery and gender disparity.
3. Toni Morrison's novels show the confusing mysteries of human emotions and relationships.
4. Her novels focus on black life across America.
5. Her novels describe the physical, emotional and spiritual ruin by slavery and it also reveal what is the surface of slavery in early America.

III. *LIBERATING THE SELF: A STUDY OF THE PROTAGONISTS IN THE FICTIONAL WORLD OF TONI MORRISON:* (Research Plan)

Toni Morrison's first novel *The Bluest Eye* is published in the year 1970, it is a story of a young girl who looses her self confidence because of her being black. This novel also advocates her severe inner conflict for self identity. Morrison's other novel *Sula* shows a picture of a contumacious woman. Her next novel *Song of Solomon* rotates around the black male character who is in search of self justification. In 1981, Toni Morrison has published her

famous novel entitled *Tar Baby*, which deals with the man-women relationship and the quest for self-realization. Her novel *Beloved* is known as Toni Morrison's masterpiece which focuses on an emancipated lady slave character named Sethe. In her novel *Jazz* she talks about racial problems. In her rest novels entitled *Love*, *Mercy*, *Home*, and *God Help the Child* the theme of self emancipation on social, racial and gender ground is refelected.

Toni Morrison depicts the struggle of black men and women who strive hard for self identity, self realization and self concept. Her characters are discontent with their lives so they react and respond to the injustice and inhumanity against them. Her entire fictional world from her first novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970) to her recent novel *God Help the Child* (2015) seems to be preoccupied with longingness of her protagonists for liberating their self from different shackles and bondages. The research tentatively proposes to follow chapter scheme mentioned below.

TENTATIVE CHAPTER SCHEME:

Preface and Acknowledgement

Chapter-I : **Introduction**

Chapter-II : ***The Bluest Eye* and *Sula***

Chapter-III: ***Song of Solomon* and *Tar Baby***

Chapter-IV: ***Beloved* and *Jazz***

Chapter-V: ***Paradise* and *Love***

Chapter-VI: ***A Mercy*, *Home* and *God Help the Child***

Chapter-VII: **Conclusion**

End Notes and References

Bibliography

The first chapter, Introduction would make a critical survey of the Afro-American literature with its socio-political footings, appalling racism and economic peonage. The place

of Toni Morrison in Afro-American literature and her literary contribution and how her characters are struggling to liberate their self would be studied and explained in detail. It also would talk about the problems of the race, gender and their status in the African-American society with the harsh relationship between the whites and blacks.

The second chapter proposes to study Toni Morrison's first and second novel entitled *The Bluest Eye* and *Sula.* In *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison portraits a young black girl growing up in the small mill town of Lorain, Ohio. Her parents are not giving any attention towards her so she feels alone and she thinks that life for her is difficult. She struggles for herself throughout the novel because other white children try to put her at the bottom level. So, Toni Morrison wants to show a lot of anger and aggression of the little black girl towards the little whites and her parents who never give her attention. Toni Morrison tries to show the treatment given to the blacks and whites. The second novel *Sula* talks about Shadrack, a resident of the Bottom. The Bottom is mostly black community in Ohio. He fought in WWI. *Sula* discusses the question that what is good and what is evil? and differentiates the terms, "good" and "evil" which are often correspondent to one another. Toni Morrison tries to study the confusing mysteries of human beings.

The third chapter will explore the novels *Song of Soloman* and *Tar Baby.* In *Song of Soloman,* Tony Morrison focuses on black life across America, focusing on the character of Milkman Dead, a young black male protagonist in search for his identity. *Tar Baby* traces the quest for self-identity of the protagonist.

The forth chapter would be a study of the novels *Beloved* and *Jazz.* In *Beloved* Toni Morrison explores the physical, emotional and spiritual loss because of slavery. Even in freedom, these characters who are former slaves are continued for devastation. The novel *Jazz* reflects a distinctive mixer of internal and external worlds. Here Morrison discusses racial tensions.

The fifth chapter would study the novels *Paradise* and *Love*. In the novel *Paradise,* Toni Morrison discusses the migration of black people from the south to the west in the late eighteenth century. Her *Love* tells the story of Bill Cosey and how he lived a miserable life due to woman who was in love with him. The protagonists of both novels were seen inching toward freedom from different repressions.

In the sixth chapter, Morrison's last novels- *A Mercy, Home* and *God Help the Child* would be studied in line of longingness of characters for liberating their self. *A Mercy* describes the surface of slavery in early America. In the novel *Home,* Morrison writes about effects of racism and sexism and sufferings of protagonist. In the last novel *God Help the Child* Morrison revolves around the life of a Bride, formerly known as Lula Ann Bridewll. She is a young black woman, who has had to overcome many obstacles in her life.

In the seventh and last chapter, findings and conclusion would be drawn based on investigations made in earlier chapters and how Morrison's protagonists rose up to position of a successful human being , overcoming on all hurdles, racial discrimination, alienation and subjugation and how they get liberated from different bondages will be assessed.

Morrison's all eleven novels from *The Bluest Eye* (1970) to *God Help the Child* (2015) will be studied with all critical faireness in line of their longingness for liberating their self from racial tensions and different bondages.

IV. RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY TO SOCIETY:

The present research work contains all eleven novels of the Afro-American writer, Toni Morrison, through which she has described the journey of the major characters from bondages to self emancipation. The present study would help to understand the life and sufferings of Morrison's characters in contemporary socio-political milieu. It also would help

to create social awareness about the humiliation of the African-American women and would also create awareness about such social ills and would help to contribute to eradicate race, caste and gender bias in the society.

V. REASERCH METHODOLGY:

The present study intends to use the sociological, historical, political, cultural and feminist interpretation of different theories in order to explore psychological problems and identity problems of Morrison's characters. Interviews of the selected writers and eminent scholars in this area would also be taken. Recent MLA style-sheet (8th edition) will be strictly followed for the writing and documentation of references.

VI. PROBABLE DATE OF COMPLITION OF WORK :

The present research work would probably be completed within three years from the date of registration.

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